

building COMMUNITY

For Indiana's Third Century

November 2002

**building
COMMUNITY**, a bimonthly publication of Indiana 2016, solicits articles from around Indiana that illustrate community-based efforts. Please electronically submit articles to jswenson@gov.state.in.us. Digital photographs are accepted and encouraged.

In this issue

Gatherings – 2

Eggseptional science – 3

Rebuilding lives – 4

Main Street awards – 4

La Columna Hispana – 5

A “write” volunteer – 5

Tornado aftermath – 6

Communities dig in – 6



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Hoosiers reach out to Moldovans

by Judy O'Bannon



Moldovan girl responds warmly to Hoosier visitors.

You might rightly ask, “Where is the country of Moldova?” The answer geographically is that it is a small country—the size of Indiana in land mass, with just 2/3 the population—nestled between the Ukraine and Romania. But for a group of Hoosiers, Moldova sits right in the middle of their hearts and minds today.

Businessman Jim Kelley of **Fort Wayne** has led a series of 15 humanitarian missions to Moldova accompanied by physicians from **Parkview Hospital**. I was excited to be part of the last four trips.

The country is the poorest in Europe, with 70% living in poverty and unemployment rates into the 60 percentile or more. From his business travels to Moldova, Mr. Kelley recognized the intense need for medical care. Together, the group looked for solutions that made the most impact, while remaining sustainable and

empowering to those Moldovans affected.

Through contact with a woman with Indiana ties, who had worked in Moldova, the group was directed to a pediatrician, Dr. Dora Dragneva, who was caring for an orphan with multiple conditions requiring complicated surgeries.

St. Vincent Hospital in **Indianapolis** generously offered to perform the needed surgeries. The child, Dr. Dragneva and an interpreter were flown here and cared for by Hoosier volunteers—all volunteers.

Since that time, cardiovascular surgeons have performed surgeries, a basic health needs clinic has been set up, and volunteers have delivered medical equipment and medicines.

But one problem kept resurfacing: the plight of orphans. Moldovan authorities have placed many orphans with foster families, with precious little in the way of support. Although they were
See Hoosiers, page 3



Surrounded by members of a foster family, First Lady Judy O'Bannon connects with new friends from Moldova.

Gatherings

by Judy O'Bannon

It's harvest time in Indiana, the season we traditionally stop and count our blessings in this country. Thanksgiving came early to me this year. It started in the form of a visit to the impoverished country of Moldova.

In our affluent country, it is easy to fall into the trap of concern for brand names, conveniences and ever-increasing opportunities and advances. But when in Moldova, one is pulled back into the realization of the basic gifts that being an American affords.



First Lady Judy O'Bannon takes time to pose with young friend in Moldova.

Our economy is on the fritz, but our free enterprise system is sound. We have experienced some scandals in the business place, but the majority of our citizens are honest and conscientious. Medical bills have risen, but our hospitals are well staffed, equipped and available. We are concerned with improving the education of our children, but our schools are heated in the winter and have books and computers.

We have detours and construction on our highways, but our roads are not dirt. We always worry about cold winters and hot summers, but we do not scour the countryside for tree branches to burn for fuel. Our water is clean, our homes equipped with sanitary facilities and most of us do not share our beds with multiple family members. We have systems in place as safety nets for emergencies and human service programs that help us move forward. We do have hope for tomorrow.

Most of all, though, I've become more thankful that we live in a country that assumes we are all citizens who should take responsibility for ourselves and others and our collected community. No fear that if someone steps out of a prescribed role, dire consequences await.

Yes, we are free—free to worship as we believe and think as we will. I may not always agree with the media, but I hail the freedom of the press as essential and basic. Bravo! It is alive and well in our country! And I'm ever so thankful for the volunteer attitude of Hoosiers. I'm thankful for a community that counts each of us as important and calls to us to jump in, get involved, take responsibility share opportunities and experience hope—hope that we indeed have the rare privilege of living a life of meaning—of making a difference in today and tomorrow for ourselves and others.

And finally, I'm thankful that in Moldova I again learned the lesson that we all have gifts, and we all have needs. When we come together, we feed each other, and the community is healed.

Hugging happy, talented and caring friends in Moldova has indeed fed my need to be loved.



Moldovan orphans delight in the attention they receive from their Hoosier friends.

Hugging happy, talented and caring friends in Moldova has indeed fed my need to be loved.

Eggceptional science

by Suzette Solomon



A Purdue Cooperative Extension program designed to teach children about agricultural production and life sciences has developed into an effective way to teach valuable life skills. In the process of observing and tending to chicks from early egg stage until after they hatched, students participating in the 4-H

Chicken Embryology Program learned about life and death, caring, embracing differences, and protecting others.

One group of 220 second graders turned the eggs three times daily and conducted experiments in an incubator. After the eggs hatched, the students watched the chicks interact with one another. They were able to apply the lessons they learned while caring for the chicks to real life interactions with other children and adults. The children became particularly protective of their chicks when they noticed bullying behavior from other chicks.

Extending their reactions into the classroom with their peers, students said that they would think before bullying and help someone who is being bullied. One teacher commented on the enhancement of the children's social awareness by noting that the students were "learning more about each other—taking time to find out about one another."

Students formed strong emotional bonds with the chicks. One second grader graciously wrote, "Thank you for letting me do this project. I really appreciate it. I love them a lot. I will miss them very much."



Hoosiers *continued from page 1*

assured subsidies for the children after break up of the Soviet Union, in reality, these families only receive the promised \$7 a month per child sporadically.

During four different visits, nine families were found that appeared caring, needy, and responsible. Three of the families are caring for 13 children each, while living in extremely rural areas with few sanitation and electrical accommodations.

Yet amidst it all are smiles and generosity overflowing from Moldovans, as well as Hoosiers. They bake breads and serve cheese while telling of crop failures and floods that threatened their winter food supply.

There is no word in Russian that is comparable to our English word "volunteer." It is a loss that sits below their civic actions and mindset. Volunteerism had no place or meaning in a communist world. But one-on-one, Moldovans are giving friends that have spoken to the spirit of Hoosiers. Nine Indiana families are sending monthly support to nine Moldovan families. And it is support in more than a monetary way. These families know they are not alone and that the caring goes both ways. September 11, 2001, showed us we are all connected in this world for good or for bad.

As a result, a brand new charitable organization, the Kelley Foundation, is now housed in Moldova, with its newly hired pediatrician and family practitioner. Together with support from all those Hoosiers who travel back and forth or connect through letters, fax machine and donations, we're making a difference for the good.

And in the process, a real leadership team is being formed here in Indiana from a group of people who took steps to get involved and found that one thing led to another...to develop into a thrill of a lifetime.

**To
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**Pediatrician Dora
Dragneva helps
Hoosiers connect with
orphans who need
love and assistance.**

by Nancy Cira

Building furniture, rebuilding lives



Dewey Brown oversees classes in woodworking that not only teach prisoners at the Indiana Women's Prison a trade, but also provide high-quality craftsmanship for state projects. The process of rebuilding their lives is the most important outcome.

Nestled in a cozy eastside **Indianapolis** neighborhood, surrounded by a barbed wire fence, sits the maximum-security Indiana Women's Prison, home to over 400 women of all ages and walks of life. For some this is a temporary place to live on the way to a rehabilitated life. For others, this is a permanent home, a secure compound where they will spend the rest of their years serving out their sentences. The campus-like fifteen-acre prison, established in 1876, features neat walkways, red brick buildings and gardens overflowing with vegetables and flowers. Prisoners and corrections personnel make up this unique community.

The women, some as young as fourteen, have committed crimes ranging from forgery to murder. Convicted felons, yes, but still women with hearts, minds and souls struggling to survive, serve their time and find their self-respect. For 19 years, Dewey Brown

has been instrumental in helping them on their journey. In an industrial arts classroom, resembling one in any high school, he teaches his students to use power tools, hammers and nails to build furniture, rocking horses and picture frames. His goal is to help these women become self-sufficient when they re-enter society. Brown says he doesn't want the women to "have to be dependent on anyone. They need to be able to know how to work out a plan, seek alternatives and make choices. We want them employable."

In all prison courses, a holistic approach or competency-based educational program is used with inmates. The women learn that they are part of a whole community in which they have something to offer and something to give back. All areas of the prison work together to encourage accomplishment of goals and developing positive self-esteem. Brown's students not only make necessities for the Indiana Women's Prison, but they also design and build items for state agencies, ranging from an information desk for the statehouse rotunda to the Indiana 2016 state fair display kiosks. "Whether we are pouring the sidewalks for the prison or making a bookcase for the Governor's Residence, we offer a lot of encouragement in the process. To perform at a level you want someone to, they have to do it because they want to," remarks Brown.

Brown is just one of several hundred guards, mentors and teachers who watch over and work side by side with these women everyday. They all are part of a community with many more stories yet to tell.

Buggies on Main Street

"Attending the 16th Annual **Indiana Main Street** Conference in **Nappanee** was especially critical for me as the new director of TenEast Main Street, a project of [Indianapolis'] East 10th Street Civic Association," explained Tammi Hughes. Hughes was one of about 165 community leaders who met amidst buggies and historic barns in the idyllic autumn setting of Nappanee's Amish Acres September 24-26 for the 16th annual Indiana Main Street conference. The conference celebrated successes of the Main Street program and provided training, inspiration and networking opportunities for participants.

Outstanding programs from around the state received recognition at the annual awards banquet held September 25. Programs from **Goshen, Madison, Lawrenceburg, Evansville, Jeffersonville, Marion, Aurora, Wabash County, Elkhart, Jeffersonville, and New Albany** took home awards.



You can bring the benefits of Main Street to your main street.

To learn more about Indiana Main Street, contact Director Mark McConaghy at 317-232-8912 or via email at MMcConaghy@commercestatein.us

“La Columna Hispana” sets example of inclusion

by Christina Gettelfinger, Harrison County Lifelong Learning Center

The Pilgrims suffered great losses during their first year in the New Land. Sickness plagued them, food was in short supply, and winter was harsh. Imagine their gratitude when they met an Indian, named Squanto, that could speak their same language and who was willing to help them. The Thanksgiving story encompasses more than a grateful spirit, it is a beautiful example of community service.

“La Columna Hispana” wants to harbor this spirit as it tries to reach out to community members. The column appears weekly in the *Corydon Democrat* and will celebrate its one year anniversary this December. Its news is offered in both Spanish and English and covers topics such as available services, community events, immigration updates, international news, jokes, and gives guest columnists the opportunity to share their talents.

Local community members have responded in a positive manner to “La Columna Hispana.” Many have commented how they enjoy learning about existing and new services as well as expand their vocabulary in Spanish or English. It is encouraging to see community members reaching out to others by posting the column at the laundromat, churches, and the Latino Center. Different organizations have used the column as a resource tool by giving it to their clients informing them of different opportunities. “La Columna Hispana” is grateful to the *Corydon Democrat* for running the column and hopes to reach out to others as Squanto did.



Volunteer develops reading and writing club

by Katy Brett

Nicole is learning that you can't judge the book by its cover—sometimes it takes experiencing some thing or some place in a new way to discover its

beauty. Yet her words have a double meaning—our Hoosier communities and schools are “prettier” when we are *here*—actively engaged and finding ways to make a difference in the places where we live.

Envisioned and executed by a community volunteer, Anne Kutak, the Kenwood Elementary Readers' and Writers' Club aims to demonstrate that reading can be and is fun, and the school is getting a bit “prettier.”

Third, fourth, and fifth grade students who choose to participate in the club spend one hour, one day a week after school with Kutak reading and discussing books. During this time, students discover the benefits of reading and outline what elements make a book a classic. They also read and discuss several children's classics, including: *Black Beauty*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Call of the Wild*.

After several months of reading, the students choose a writing project. Last year's students chose to create the *first ever* school newspaper. Students researched subjects and conducted interviews of interesting school activities. Others created fictional pieces and poems like Nicole's. Student editors polished the content, and the newspaper staff distributed printed copies to every room in the school.

Principal Mary Beth Nickolaou calls Anne Kutak, “our community volunteer extraordinaire.” The Readers' and Writers' Club truly is an example of how one person can make an impact—demonstrating it just takes one person to step outside and decide to make a difference today. Anne Kutak is transferring her love of reading and writing to these students—how are you working to make your community a “prettier” place to live?

Has your town put out the welcome mat?

Like Corydon, many communities around the state have had an influx of new residents, many of whom speak Spanish as their first language. This affords each of us the opportunity, even the responsibility, to reach out. *Indiana 2016* has begun to translate our brochure and other materials into Spanish.

What has your community done to welcome your Hispanic and Latino neighbors? Send us an email and tell us what has worked for your community indiana2016@gov.state.in.us.

America

By Nicole Ann-Marie Layba

The first day I came to America I didn't like it.
Because I had never seen it.
When I saw America, it was beautiful.
I never wanted to leave.
Well, I thank God I never left.
While I was there it became prettier.



If your school has witnessed the impact of community volunteers or community interaction, we want to hear about it! Email or fax a one-page synopsis to *Indiana 2016* at indiana2016@gov.state.in.us or 317-283-1201 respectively.

by Aja May



With a little help from friends, Martinsville citizens collected what was left of their possessions after devastating tornadoes struck September 20.



Community healing

When Indiana faced severe tornados on Sept. 20, Hoosiers from all over the state reached out to support those who were affected. While some homeowners faced minor repairs and tree damage, others were looking at an outcome that was much more severe. Either way, neighbors and community members decided to do what they could to make the clean-up process a little easier.

In **Ellettsville**, Diana Graves recalls men with chain saws clearing debris as soon as the storms passed in order to allow emergency vehicles to reach victims. Children and adults spread out, searching through rubble for personal belongs that had been scattered by the storm. Citizens prepared food to feed the workers and those who had been dislocated by the tornados.

Stories are similar in eastside Indianapolis, where neighbors also lent a hand where they could. Anne-Marie Predovich, Executive Director of the **Community Alliance of the Far Eastside (CAFÉ)**, describes an atmosphere of camaraderie among those who came together to help, "What I think was neat was all the different folks that came out to help." Local food stores, gas stations, non-profits and government agencies formed a network to get aid to those who needed it. Thrift stores opened up to get clothing to those who were evacuated out of their homes, school administrators worked long hours to find out how to get displaced students to school on Monday, and churches opened their doors to those who were needed shelter from the rain that followed the storms.

When **Martinsville High School** had to cancel their football game against **Lawrence Central** due to tornado damage, their competitors demonstrated true sportsmanship and showed up the next day to help with the clean-up efforts. Bill Cunningham, Martinsville Chamber of Commerce president, remarked on the help that received from surrounding communities, "In that time of need it was comforting to know that we had so many caring friends outside of our city."

In communities across the state, Hoosiers showed their commitment to their fellow neighbors and their willingness to help out when times are bad. From the relationships formed during such tragedies, future partnerships can be formed. Predovich discovered this truth, "We learned that it shouldn't take a tragedy to build up these networks." The storms left not only a path of physical destruction, but an opportunity for new growth, new alliances and new hope.

Communities dig in to plant trees

by Katy Brett

Above: Judy O'Bannon and a group of Fairfield Elementary students prepare to plant a tree during an October 21 planting in **Fort Wayne's Packard Park**. The planting was part of an effort in several Hoosier communities to promote urban forestry and to plan *today* for green spaces in our cities and towns *tomorrow*.

Right, the first lady and Mike Warner, Woody Warehouse, plant a tree in **Evansville's Price Park**. The trees were a gift from the **Lizton**-based Woody Warehouse that specializes in, among other things, urban forest management. The plantings symbolized cultivation of hope through working together and preparing for the future.



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